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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [EAID](#) [GR](#) [SNAR](#) [CA](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: Greek-U.S. Partnership in Afghanistan and Pakistan

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[D](#). 09 ATHENS 1023; E. 08 ATHENS 1719; F. 08 ATHENS 1618

CLASSIFIED BY: George Frowick, Political Counselor; REASON: 1.4(B),
(D)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) The Government of Greece continues to respond positively to USG requests for increasing military and civilian assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan, despite its dire fiscal realities. According to Hellenic Aid (HA), Greece's development agency, the GoG has pledged 3.7 million euro to Afghanistan and 500,000 euro to Pakistan in funding for humanitarian and other development assistance programs. The head of HA, Ambassador Mercourios Karafotias, told PolCouns and A/EconCouns on July 23 that, following her initial meeting with Secretary of State Clinton, Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis made Afghanistan Greece's highest development priority and, while she did not make it a priority, is trying to do more in Pakistan. As a result, Karafotias assured Post, these pledges are safe from recent budget cuts undertaken by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and he believes that the GoG will increase development funding for Afghanistan next year. Military contributions include training programs, staffing of an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT), and responsibility for Kabul Airport Security beginning 2010. These efforts demonstrate both the GoG's emphasis on assistance to the region and its desire to maintain good relations with the new U.S. administration. One new factor motivating Greek interest in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the need to address the wave of immigrants arriving in Greece from these two countries. Post sees an opportunity to use GoG support for the new Administration and the immigration issue to force Af-Pak issues to the forefront and to create a strategic partner in the region to address the problem of displaced persons in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

POLITICAL-MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS

[1](#)2. (C) 2009 Political-Military assistance: The GoG has consistently contributed to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan through provision of personnel and funding. One GoG engineering battalion is currently attached to an Italian unit in Kabul and 10 officers are stationed at ISAF HQ. The engineering battalion previously faced regional caveats restricting operations to Kabul. These have been lifted by the GoG allowing the battalion to move to Herat in August or September. The GoG has also contributed 900,000 EUR to the British/French "Helicopter Fund."

[1](#)3. (C) Future Political-Military assistance: Greek Ambassador Chalistani, Chief of Staff to Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis recently stated that as OSCE Chair, Greece is pushing for an increased OSCE role in Afghanistan's upcoming elections.

The GoG recently pledged 100,000 euro and is planning to send two medical units to support Election Support Forces. Preparations are in progress to deploy one 17-member OMLT to Kabul and to send 45 persons to take responsibility of the Kabul Airport Security Mission in 2010.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

¶4. (SBU) Afghanistan (see reftels A-C): Hellenic Aid (HA) has told A/EconCouns that the GoG has pledged 3.7 million euro in assistance for Afghanistan for 2009, as follows:

-- 2 million euro (pledged at the March 31 International Conference on Afghanistan in The Hague) to be used for general reconstruction/rehabilitation projects, preventive medicine, anti-trafficking for children and women, and cultural projects (e.g., preserving historical records, etc.);

-- 1 million euro (pledged at the NATO summit) for general development projects (100,000 euro of this has been earmarked for the UN for the election support described above);

-- 400,000 euro in food aid (earmarked for Afghanistan out of 3 million euro in funding the GoG had already committed in FY2009 funds through the World Food Program (WFP)); and

-- 300,000 euro to continue funding agriculture technical assistance through the Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).

¶5. (SBU) Pakistan (see reftels D-F): HA also has told A/EconCouns that the GoG has pledged 400,000 euro for food aid (earmarked for Pakistan out of 3 million euro in funding the GoG had already committed in FY2009 funds to WFP) and 100,000 euro in assistance for internally displaced persons. In addition, HA advises that the GoG is considering pledging potentially up to 200,000 euro in targeted assistance for Pakistan's governance area through the UN's Office on Drugs and Crimes (from 300,000 euro the GoG has already pledged to this office).

¶6. (SBU) HA has indicated they are interested in exploring ways to partner with other countries in both Afghanistan and Pakistan in implementing projects in the areas of agriculture and health, as well as potential projects on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region (although Ambassador Karafotias is skeptical that GoG funding can have an appreciable impact in the latter). HA finds partnering or co-funding projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan with other donors a more efficient use of Greece's limited funding, since HA does not have a presence on the ground, and establishing one would increase their administrative costs, leaving little leftover for actual program funding. According to Ambassador Karafotias, the GoG currently is considering using half of the funds pledged for Afghanistan (excluding the 500,000 euro earmarked for the WFP and election support) for a child vaccination program being run by the Canadians. HA is talking to the British about cooperating with them on projects in Afghanistan, and he indicated the GoG would be happy to discuss with the US similar cooperation in Afghanistan or Pakistan. (Note: Post is working with the British and Canadian embassies, as well as with USAID, to provide information to HA on ways the GoG could partner with our countries to fund projects in sectors in which the GoG has an interest and comparative advantage in Afghanistan and Pakistan. End Note.)

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Greece is under tremendous pressure by the European Commission (EC) and the IMF to cut its budget deficit in 2009-10. In a meeting on July 23 with PolCouns and A/EconCouns, Ambassador Karafotias downplayed recent press reports that the Ministry of Finance cut 120 million euro from the GoG's 2009 international development aid budget in order to help trim this deficit. He assured Post that the cuts were far lower and will not impact pledges made thus far to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Karafotias stressed that following her initial meeting with Secretary Clinton

in January, Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis made Afghanistan the highest development priority for Greece, and that the GoG will try to pledge even more assistance for Afghanistan next year. While Pakistan is not one of the highest priorities, the GoG continues to explore ways to increase its aid there. Despite the budget pressures, Karafotias seemed confident that the Foreign Minister would prevail in protecting funds pledged for Afghanistan and Pakistan from further budget cuts. Post will continue to work with HA to follow-through on its pledges and to consider additional assistance for these high priorities.

18. (C) Ever present Greek concerns over border issues with Turkey dampen GoG responsiveness to requests for critical enablers (helicopters, medical units, convoy security). Heavy coverage of Turkish overflights of Greek islands in the Aegean reinforce the public's view that GoG military assets need to protect the homeland. Pending resolution of this key strategic issue, Greece is unlikely to provide assistance in the form of critical enablers or substantial military personnel.

19. (C) Opportunity for Strategic Partnership: Notwithstanding its resource constraints, Greece has a strategic interest in solving the problem of displaced persons in Afghanistan and Pakistan as it is a main entry point for migrants from Afghanistan and Pakistan into the EU. The GoG has been heavily criticized over its inability to stem the flow. The GoG is both cracking down on smuggling and illegal migration and stepping up its efforts to obtain EU support. Post has publicly focused on the strategic interests Greece shares with the U.S. in resolving the migration and displaced persons issues and will continue to deploy this argument in favor of increased Greek contributions to Pakistan and Afghanistan. End Comment.
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